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AN EVALUATION OF THE PLACE OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
IN THE PROTESTANTISM OF TODAY

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INTRODUCTION.

I. PURPOSE: The discussion of the Disciples of Christ contained in the following pages is the survey of a study in which the writer attempts to find just what the place of the Disciples of Christ has been, and is, in the Protestant cause. One does not make a large investment without first considering the worth of that in which the investment is made. It follows that one should not invest a life without a thorough examination of that cause in which it is invested. The writer is planning to devote his life to the cause of the Christian ministry through the Disciples of Christ Church. Hence, he feels the need of knowing just what the Disciples' task is.

Being driven by an inner compulsion to the cause of the Protestant Christian ministry one's first thought is to accept such a call in the church of his own family tradition. Such was accepted recently, but now there arises questions. Is the call of the Disciples' ministry the best place for such an investment to be made? The mere fact that one's father and grandfather were members of the Disciples' Church is not sufficient justification for the devotion of a life to its ministry. Rather, the group must be evaluated in the light of searching questions. Do the Disciples have a vital message? With all of the Protestant groups in existence today is there adequate reason that the Disciples should

continue? Out of what did they originate and what has been their history? Has God been able to use them, to work through them for the betterment of the world? These are some of the questions which must be answered before the investment is made.

The purpose of this discussion is to subject the Disciples of Christ to an examination in which these questions may be answered. It is to find out whether or not the Disciples have in their cause sufficient to justify the investment of a life.

II. METHOD: The method must of necessity be by examination, but such an examination includes both past and present. It goes further back than the time of the first organization or the first meeting, to an examination of the historical incidents which led to that first meeting. Here, of course, is the background; and reasons are given later why it is believed that the truest picture of the real purpose of this historical movement is to be found in the background rather than in even the infancy period of the organization. In the background lay the roots from which sap flowed to give life and impetus to the new organization.

Following an examination of the background, those specific steps which led to a new organization are traced. There is always an effort to find out just what the group was trying to do. What did Thomas Campbell want? Why did he and his son, Alexander, each break with the church of his tradition? After a dis-

cussion of origin, a brief survey of the early history of Disciples is presented. Such is accompanied by an evaluation in which there are points of criticism and also of commendation.

Finally, there is an interpretation of the message of the Disciples in the light of today, and an evaluation of their present task. Some points of needed emphases are suggested. There are two factors, as will be shown more fully, which determine the needed emphases of a church today. One is the need at hand. The fact of existence under the name of Christ in the twentieth century carries with it certain demands. The other factor is that of heritage. What lies back of the origin of a group, and what has been its motivation through the years?

The heritage of the Disciples of Christ and the need of the twentieth century do not stand apart as opposing poles. Rather, when each is properly understood, they meet in a oneness and demand a common task. What is that task?

Being one of the Disciples of Christ the writer feels free to criticise where criticism seems necessary. There is always an effort to be both frank and honest; such must be if the quest is in the direction of truth. Frankness, however, and the policy of honestly facing the facts go hand in hand, it is hoped, with sincerity and fairness.

The discussion deals with an interpretation and

evaluation of the message of the Disciples of Christ and hence is confined to this end. In no wise is an attempt made to treat the entire Disciples' program. Great aspects of their work, missionary, educational, young people's, etc., remain practically untouched.

Chapter I.

THE BACKGROUND.

I. The European Heritage

A. A Divided Christendom

B. Dogmatism in Protestantism

C. Johannes Coccejus

1. Historical approach to Bible

2. Covenant theology

D. John Locke

1. Knowledge from sensation and reflection

2. Freedom of man

II. The American Frontier

A. Religious Slumps and Awakenings

B. The Pioneer Spirit.

THE BACKGROUND.

When considering the background out of which the Disciples of Christ came into existence, religion as it was found on two continents must be considered.

On the continent of Europe in the eighteenth century there were in existence a number of religious bodies. Almost without exception each came into being as a separate unit for the purpose of "restoring primitive Christianity". Church reformation has always been conceived in terms of the restoration of an uncorrupted primitive condition.

Roman Catholicism itself does not hesitate to proclaim its mission as perpetuating the religion of Jesus, as he established it, without modification or corruption. Luther, who broke with the established Catholic Church, and gave Protestantism its impetus, set out to return to primitive Christianity according to the New Testament alone. From the beginning of Protestantism, which itself began not as one but as several groups, many attempts to restore the early church pattern have been made, each resulting in a new denomination. Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, all are "restoring the apostolic order".

Significance, however, is increased rather than decreased by this common purpose lying back of so many separate movements. We are immediately impressed by

the fact that surely the church through the years has gone far astray from the pattern of the early church. Each of these movements in time has had and is having a worthy history. The leaders have been men of noble souls, men of consecration and devotion; and who would say that the whole cause of the church has not been helped by the peculiar contribution of each group? Our task in this paper is the concern of those features peculiar to one of these movements, namely, that known as the "Disciples of Christ" or "Christian Church".

Every movement has its antecedents. Fertile soil and a seed are both essential to the growth of a new plant. "The antecedents of the Campbells were not only the Reformers of the sixteenth century and their successors, and the Waldenses before them all, but especially Calixtus, Grotius, Coccejus, Baxter, Locke and all those who yearned for the union of the house of God. For more than a century in Europe, as well as for a less period in America, indications directly foreshadowed the movement of the Disciples of Christ."⁽¹⁾

The message of the Campbells, who inaugurated the movement of the Disciples of Christ, was "the union of all of God's people". Naturally, if such a seed was to find root there must have existed a broken church; this there was. The church had long since departed from the simplicity of apostolic practice; interpretations of the scriptures were many and diversified; pagan

customs and rites had been brought into the church, and a great tide of materialism had swept across it.

As far back as the third century friction was visible between the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches. In 1054 each excommunicated the other, and subsequently they are known in history as the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches. As the Roman Empire faded, the Western Church rose to power and remained the dominating influence in Europe for centuries. By the fifteenth century the Western Church had become so corrupt that nothing could hold the falling fabric save a long needed reformation. Such a reformation came in the sixteenth century. It was led by Martin Luther outside the church and by Ignatius Loyola within the church. Both were sincere Christian men, contending for the right as they saw it. Out of this mighty struggle, which shook all of Europe, came the Protestant Reformation, and another chapter in the history of Christianity was opened.

In order to cope with the system of dogmatic theology of the Roman Catholic Church, Protestantism established its own systems of dogmatic theology and required absolute loyalty to its precepts by all who sought entrance into its different fellowships. This was a seed, however, which resulted in discord rather than harmony, for "in denying the right of private interpretation, which is one of the fundamental principles of Protestantism, division was precipitated in the Protestant household, so that instead of one Protestant

Church, there were Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Congregational communions, and, in many instances, there was a more bitter hostility between these than against the Roman Catholic Church."⁽¹⁾

The seventeenth century was a period of bitter strife in religious matters. It seemed to some observers that Protestantism had adopted the tools for its own destruction, for most of its larger communions were dividing and sub-dividing over such hair-splitting interpretations. The multiplicity of divisions pointed toward suicide.

It wasn't long until prophet voices crying out for a united church began to be heard more numerously. Voices were followed by conferences. While these things were transpiring on the continent similar efforts were being launched in England and Scotland. "Johannes Coccejus, the scholar, John Wesley, the reformer, Jeremy Taylor, the preacher, John Locke, the philosopher, and others were pleading for the recognition of brotherhood among Christians, while a belligerent sectarianism was trying to strangle it to death."⁽²⁾

As systems of dogmatic theology failed to unite, two distinct movements were seen to emerge. The first was a series of mystical movements which substituted the emotional element for theological dogmatism, as the criterion of religion. Out of this movement came the

(1) Ainslie, MDUC p. 65
(2) Ainslie, MDUC p. 78

Methodists, the Friends, the Moravians, and other kindred groups, each leaving the names of its forerunners deeply imbedded in the pages of history. Profound as the movements were, and anxious as their leaders were ^d for church union, they contributed little to the actual union problem.

The other movement was based on the philosophy of empiricism. It excluded the element of revelation and affirmed that all knowledge was based on the senses or the perception of simple historical fact, and thus sought through a universal reason of mankind to establish a universal Christianity. The movement did not succeed in uniting Christendom, but it did serve to break up conditions preparatory to the reconstruction of thought.

In addition to these two general trends there were more specific currents of thought flowing through the European Continent. These more specific movements are best seen in leading personalities in whom they centered and in whom they often had their origin. Some of them will be examined presently.

There is a further background, too, than these local movements, for the thought life of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cannot be disassociated with the Renaissance. The Renaissance was the morning of the awakening; it made possible the sixteenth century Reformation, and gave to all of art and literature a new impetus so that it bowed before the altar of freedom.

Religion seems not to tolerate freedom of thought,

for, following the sixteenth century awakening, it is again seen following the channels of fixed doctrine. Over against Roman Catholicism which proposed to save all, irrespective of their condition, who were in the Church at the time of their death, was set Calvin's dogma of predestination, which declared that the divine creeds are eternal and unchangeable and that some of the human race are chosen for eternal life and the others are left for eternal damnation without any merit or choice of their own.

Many movements arose seeking the mitigation of so harsh a doctrine. The greatest single step toward rising above it was that made possible by Johannes Coccejus, a learned professor in the University of Leyden. Coccejus made the first attempt at systematic Biblical study and theology, and laid down new rules for the interpretation of the Scriptures by which he came to be known as "the father of modern exegesis". He broke with the orthodox custom of his time in reading dogmas into texts and interpreting Scripture by tradition, allegory, and symbolism; and, getting his ideas from the Bible and the political conditions that surrounded him, he proposed the historical method of Bible study, inquiring into circumstances and the time of writing each book. He suggested that the meaning of a word be ascertained from the ordinary sense in connection with the context; and further, that God's dealing with man has been a development, marked by dispensations, and that salvation

is a covenant between God and man in which God and man cooperate; God being the sovereign, it is His part to present the terms and it is man's part to accept on his own free will. The distinction between the dispensations was the key to Scriptural interpretation."⁽¹⁾

Such a doctrine in the seventeenth century was revolutionary. It upset established systems of dogmatic theology and meant that proof texts could no longer be picked at random to uphold cherished doctrines. When it was fully understood it caused a storm of protest, but its influence, both conscious and unconscious affected the thought of many in all communions. Because it left a new thought germ, it added to the numerous secessions.

The secession from the Established Church of Scotland in 1732 included in its theology the cardinal principles of this covenant theology. It is significant for us that the Campbells were members of that branch of the Presbyterian Church which seceded and thus lived in the atmosphere of the covenant theology. Thomas Campbell was educated at one of the seceder theological seminaries where this new theology was held in prominence. Alexander Campbell differed in minor points with Coccejus, but made many lengthy quotations from him in his publications and in many instances followed the leadership of the distinguished Dutch theologian.

Another influence equally as great as an antecedent force in the rise of the Disciples was the philosophy

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Ainslie, MDUC p. 75

of John Locke. Both Thomas and Alexander Campbell were abreast of all thought of their generations; they were men well acquainted with philosophy and theology, and "Alexander Campbell was as good a Lockian as Locke himself." Locke's conclusion, in brief, was that all knowledge comes from sensation and reflection. "Reflection can add nothing to the materials which sensation supplies, and both of these processes are the concern of the individual man. There are no ideas innate in the mind, not even the idea of God, or of cause and effect, or of axioms of mathematics. There is no fund of knowledge necessarily common to all men. Each man has only the knowledge which he constructs for himself out of the materials of his own observation. The establishment of all knowledge upon this basis of mere sensation was for him the means of 'clearing up' ethical, philosophical, and religious ideas and setting aside much that he called 'metaphysical rubbish', untenable codes of personal and political behavior and superstitious notions in religion."⁽¹⁾

Little did Locke know the revolutionary consequences that would result from his system in the hands of his successors who carried his principles to more rigid conclusions. It is not for us here to follow those who carried Locke's thinking to skeptical implications, but rather to establish the fact that Locke emphasized, even to the point of exaggeration, the claims of the

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individual. The value and freedom of the individual are the thesis of his writings. Intellectual, political and religious liberty belong to every man. He considered it better for a man to learn at first-hand rather than at second-hand, as through books.

Locke's view of religious toleration is significant for us, particularly since Alexander Campbell was himself so good a Lockian. Briefly, Locke says, "It is true that the Bible is a repository of sacred truth about matters otherwise inaccessible to the human mind, but one man has as good a right as another to interpret that volume, and as a matter of fact, their interpretations differ. The only practical course then, since none has a right to impose his belief upon another, is to let them differ.....Men should hold their theological opinions subject to the consideration that they may be wrong and put the emphasis upon the practical virtues." (1)

The established churches of the eighteenth century were arid and mechanical. They "exhibited most of the typical defects and limitations, but not many of the characteristic virtues of the period." Theology was chiefly concerned with the task of proving the reasonableness of Christianity. Casting a shadow over all of Christendom was the spirit of fixed, rigid rules, a dominating authority, and a decided lack of toleration. It is no wonder that Coccejus' ideas of an historical approach to the Bible and that salvation is experienced

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in a covenant between man and God, and Locke's emphasis on the freedom of the individual, particularly relating to his religious thought, did not receive a hearty welcome in the organized churches of the day.

It was with such a European heritage that the reformers with whom we are here concerned began their work on the American frontier. Let us look then to America.

The American colonies were, for a large part, established by religious radicals. Early settlers came to America to escape European religious domination. The new-comers were not all one group, in fact, they were of many denominations, but each in its own way opposed intolerance in religion. Some groups included both social and religious radicals. Thus, some years following the arrival of the first settlers, "in spite of the existence of established churches in most of the colonies, and even established Episcopacy in several of them, a very large percentage of the colonists were non-conformists who were well schooled in the tradition of protest against the established order of things and independent action in accordance with their own religious convictions. This radicalism grew rapidly in the fertile soil of the new land."⁽¹⁾

Religion furnished the motive for migration, and served as a compelling force in individual and civil life during the colonial period. There came, however, a period of religious decline in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and this, in turn, was

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Garrison, RFF p. 51

followed by the "Great Awakening", a new era of religious enthusiasm about 1740. Whitefield, Wesley's associate, and Jonathan Edwards were notable figures in this revival.

During the period of the Revolutionary War, America saw its second religious slump. The "Second Awakening", or the "Great Revival of the West", as America's third period of religious fervor is sometimes called, came about 1800. This movement was characterized by great camp meetings held in Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and other states in the South. These meetings were nearly always notable for the variety of physical experiences and demonstrations which accompanied their religious enthusiasm. These frenzies may be attributed to the fact that the belief was then current that conversion, to be genuine, must be accompanied by an emotional experience. Back of them was a fear of sin and an expressed need of salvation; to this extent they approached the spiritual world. This "Great Revival in the West" was confined almost entirely to a frontier area west of the Alleghenies. It was in this area and in this period that the Disciples originated.

It must be remembered that these were days of pioneering. The pioneer was strong in body, and vigorous in mind. Not an educated man always, but a free-thinker. In his economic, moral, and intellectual life he was a rugged individualist. The pioneer lacked system and organization; "the way to do a thing, for him, was

just to do it". These fundamental qualities made him independent and straightforward, but they did not fit him for dealing adequately with more complex social situations or intellectual problems. "He did not study the chemistry of soils; he farmed. He did not inquire into the principles of heredity; he raised cattle. He did not investigate the synoptic problem; he read his Bible.

"The pioneer was, in short, magnificently competent in dealing with simple situations which require energy and courage, but he was constantly tempted to the oversimplification of problems which were not always simple."⁽¹⁾

When an intelligent, historical attitude toward the Bible, coupled with the desire for a new intellectual and religious liberty, embodied in great God-loving and God-fearing personalities, met this pioneer spirit which was boldly and courageously alive and awake, though sometimes misguided, something had to happen. This combination made for too much fire and enthusiasm to be brought within the confines of any existing sect or organization. There was not sufficient elasticity in the existing set-up of the religious order to permit the housing of this new "heresy". The result was a new movement on the frontier.

The background of this European heritage which moved toward enlightenment and tolerance, combined with the pioneer spirit of what was then Western America and

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Garrison, REF p. 58.

warmed by a religious enthusiasm, is significant and should be borne in mind as one attempts to understand the Disciples today. Here lie the roots of opinions, attitudes, beliefs and ideas found today in the Disciples Brotherhood. Not all of them, no, for the Disciples have grown with an expanding world, but much of their thought life is rooted here and he who would understand them best will taste of the water at the well.

Chapter II.

ORIGIN.

I. Thomas Campbell

A. To America

B. Break with Presbyterians

II. The Christian Association

A. "The Declaration and Address"

III. Alexander Campbell

A. The Haldanes

B. Break with the Presbyterians

C. To America

IV. The Brush Run Church

A. Baptism

B. Alexander takes command

V. With the Baptists

A. Excommunicated

VI. Other Leaders

A. Walter Scott

B. Barton W. Stone

VII. Disciples and Christians.

ORIGIN.

Someone has well said, "Every great institution is the lengthened shadow of a great individual". Because of the truth in such a statement the specific steps which resulted in a new denomination, "The Disciples of Christ", will be more meaningful after a brief introduction to the Campbells, father and son.

Thomas Campbell was a Presbyterian minister of Irish birth, but Scottish lineage and education. He was born in 1763. He had received full undergraduate training at the University of Glasgow and such theological training as was provided by "the Anti-Burgher division of the Seceder branch of the Presbyterian Church in its theological seminary". (Note in this title the evidence of a denomination's continual breakdown into smaller groups.)

While Thomas Campbell was engaged as a village pastor and also a school teacher two influences were in operation which eventually caused him to change his course. The first of these was frequent contact with an independent church in the neighboring town of Rich Hill. Here he learned to know and appreciate visiting ministers of wide repute who were giving expression to a new freedom. These visitations did not shake Campbell's own theology, but they did serve to give him a different feeling toward the place of orthodoxy and a sympathetic

attitude toward those who did not hold his view.

The other influence was that of an increasing narrowness within the ranks of his own church; an attitude which was continually causing division. The Seceder Presbyterians had left the established church of Scotland in 1733. Soon they had split into two groups, Burghers and Anti-Burghers. Later, still during Campbell's active ministry, both Burghers and Anti-burghers divided over minute and obscure issues into New Lights and Old Lights. Convinced of the uselessness of such divisions, Thomas Campbell made an attempt, unsuccessful though it was, to unite the Burghers and Anti-burghers.

In 1807, Thomas Campbell left his parrish and his family behind and came to America in quest of health. Being a minister in good standing of the Seceder Presbyterian Church which was active also in America, he was assigned work in western Pennsylvania. While making a trip through the thinly settled region north of Pittsburgh to administer the sacrament he found members of various sects who had been deprived of Christian privileges because of isolation. Deploring party divisions as he did, it was only natural for him to invite all who felt duly prepared to partake of communion without regard to sect. The evidence does not clearly show whether this invitation was extended to all groups or only to different Presbyterian sects.⁽¹⁾ But, whichever it was, it was too liberal an attitude, and as a

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result, he was censured by the Secession Presbytery. The synod released him on a technicality, but a committee reported very unfavorably on his actions and he was left under a cloud of suspicion which soon caused his complete severance from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

After he formally renounced the authority of the synod, however, he continued preaching, in churches whenever invited, otherwise in private homes. His emphasis was on the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice; the burden of his plea was for Christian liberality and union. Among his hearers, many of whom were Seceder Presbyterians, there developed a group of sympathizers and loyal supporters.

The time soon came for a meeting of his habitual hearers in order that they might "give more definiteness to the movement in which they had thus far been co-operating without any formal organization or definite arrangement". The maxim, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent we are silent", was proposed as expressive of their ideal. The group organized themselves into "The Christian Association of Washington" on August 17, 1809. The act of organization was followed by Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address" which was read and approved at a subsequent meeting, on September 7, 1809. This action constituted no revolt. They were merely a group organized to promote goodwill and brotherliness among groups which were now in

existence. A new and separate denomination was far from their minds.

This fraternizing on the part of Mr. Campbell and his followers was not a new thing; there were in existence several cooperative movements in America, one such being the American Bible Society. And yet there was something more than another effort toward good-will and toleration in the movement of this little group. "There was dynamite in the idea that Mr. Campbell had planted at the heart of that innocent appearing little club. He was not looking for a method of cooperation among denominations or denominationalists, but for a new principle for the constitution of the church."⁽¹⁾

The old method had been one of exclusion. There were theologians and there were "restorers of primitive Christianity"; each offered an elaborate system for organization and for worship practices. Those within the elaborate systems did not hesitate to cast out all who differed on any detail of pattern or policy, and they continued to divide over the smallest issues until in some instances, the vanishing point was reached. In contrast to this, "Thomas Campbell's plan looked toward the inclusion of all who agreed upon the few obvious essentials, rather than the exclusion of all who differed upon any of the manifold details of Christian thought or primitive practice."⁽²⁾ Knowing how difficult it

(1) Garrison, RFF p. 78

(2) Ibid, p. 79.

is for new thought to find favorable soil in the realm of organized religion it is not surprising to find this group soon isolated and forced to take up the reins of their ideal as an independent group. This independence was not immediate, however, as we shall see later.

When Thomas Campbell came to America the responsibility for care of his family fell largely upon the oldest son, Alexander, then nineteen. Alexander assumed command of his father's school for a short time and then in the fall of the following year, 1808, complying with wishes received from his father, started, with the family, for America. But soon after the start was made their ship was wrecked off the coast of Scotland. As a result it was necessary to postpone the journey for a year, and the young Alexander took advantage of his unexpected delay by spending the year in the University of Glasgow. In the perils of shipwreck he had a religious experience which caused him to make definite his plans to enter the ministry,--he had considered it for some time, now it was final.

During Alexander Campbell's sojourn at Glasgow he contacted the movement and the work which Robert and James Alexander Haldane had started. This movement, which resulted in the organization of a Congregational Church, was an attempt to get back to a vital religion. The way was that which is generally found, "restoring primitive Christianity". The Haldanes with the help of Mr. Greville Ewing, who had charge of a seminary

for them in Glasgow, made a real contribution to the cause of Protestantism, at this time, and to the thinking of Alexander Cambell. They spoke out boldly against a church which had become cold and formal. They had no tolerance toward ministers who were mere "job-holders" and found satisfaction in administering the sacraments, but who did not touch the real issues of life. The clergy monopolized the business of preaching and teaching religion but did not reach the vital issues. "The church was terribly respectable, but had neither expansive force nor saving power." The Haldanes were men of means and they used much of their wealth to train teachers, evangelists, and missionaries and send them out with a vital message and one that reached the hearts of men.

During his year at Glasgow, young Cambell became a very personal friend of Mr. Ewing, and through his activities gained some insight into what religion could and should do. As a result he became at once dissatisfied with his connection with the Seceder Presbyterian Church. "When he was examined to ascertain his fitness to partake of the communion--examination being necessary because he had no church letter and because the Seceders were very solicitous that no unqualified person should commune--the church found no fault with his profession of faith. Nevertheless, when the moment for communion arrived, he delayed until the last, postponing the decision as long as possible, and then laid down his token

and walked out. In doing so he virtually walked out of the Presbyterian Church." (1)

Alexander Campbell was twenty-one years old when he literally "checked out" of the Presbyterian Church. His was a practical rather than a theoretical objection to the organized church of his boyhood. Such a church was too dogmatic and too little interested in the real message of the Christ of the New Testament. In August, he, with the family, again embarked for America. He was possessed of a passion to preach but had no church. He wondered how he could make his father understand that his action had been necessary.

Thomas Campbell met his family in western Pennsylvania on October 19, 1809; it was a happy reunion. Here it was discovered that during the two years of separation father and son had each broken with his religious past and set out on a quest not knowing where he was going. Separated by an ocean, each had made a similar move and set out toward the same goal. Naturally, embarrassing explanations on both sides were made unnecessary.

By the time of this reunion the "Declaration and Address" was in print. Alexander studied it and became at once enthusiastically associated with his father in the new Christian Association.

Not wanting to become another sect, but fearing the possibilities, they, in 1810, made overtures to the

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Garrison, RFF p. 84.

"Synod of Pittsburgh for Christian and Ministerial Communion" with the regular Presbyterian Church. The synod, by a unanimous vote, refused to receive them.

Having been refused fellowship with a regular communion, they organized their membership the following year at Brush Run into a church. This act of May 4, 1811, really established them as a separate denomination, though consisting of but one small country church with thirty members. A meeting house was at once erected in the valley of Brush Run, and the first meeting in the simple structure was held on June 16, 1811.

On the birth of his first child, Alexander Campbell restudied the question of infant baptism and found no scriptural authority for it. He further decided that those who had been sprinkled in infancy were really not baptized at all. As a result, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, their wives and three others, were immersed at the hands of a baptist preacher, on June 12, 1812. Others of the Brush Run Church soon followed their example. After this experience, the leadership of the movement fell gradually into the hands of Alexander Campbell.

The fact of immersion brought them into closer relationships with the Baptists, and in 1813, still not wanting to be a separate group, they affiliated themselves with the Redstone Baptist Association. In this union the "Reformers", as the Brush Run group was termed by others, were not required to subscribe to the Philadelphia Confession and were to "be allowed to teach and

preach whatever they learned from the Holy Scriptures". Almost from the beginning they found themselves looked upon with suspicion by the Baptists, largely because this particular group of Baptists feared the highly educated, and preferred a minister from the ranks of the people, earning his support at some secular occupation. Alexander Campbell's "Sermon on Law" preached before the Baptists in 1816, and later published, in which he held to the historical development, showing the supremacy of the New Testament and Christ over the old law, brought further cleavage within the ranks of the Baptists.

In 1823, when he knew that the Redstone Baptist Association planned to expel him, Alexander Campbell with a group of twenty took their letters from the Brush Run Church, organized a church in Wellsburg, and applied for membership in the Mahoning Baptist Association. Fourteen churches were later excommunicated by the Redstone Association for being in sympathy with the Reformers. Immediately they joined the ranks of the Reformers. The Mahoning Association came over to the Reformers in a body, with the exception of four churches. The basis of this union with the Reformers was the acceptance of the Bible as the basis rather than the Philadelphia Confession.

The union with the Baptists, however, existed with increasing tension until 1832 when complete separation was necessary. Bitterness had gotten into the

controversy and finally six "Reformer" preachers were excommunicated. This act marked the separation of Reformers from the Baptists. Upon this action Campbell wrote: "All the world must see that we have been forced into a separate communion. We were driven out of doors because we preferred the approbation of the Lord to the approbation of any sect in Christendom. If that be our weakness, we ought not to be despised--if that be our wisdom, we ought not to be condemned. We have lost no peace of conscience, nor of the honor which comes from God, none of the enjoyments of the Holy Spirit, nothing of the sweetness of the Christian communion by the unkindness of those who once called us brethren."⁽¹⁾

Walter Scott, a former Presbyterian minister who had joined the ranks of the Mahoning Baptist Association, emerged as the evangelist for the Reformers. He preached fervently and enthusiastically, unfolding to multitudes in their order these truths of the Scripture: "going, preaching, believing, repenting, baptism, salvation, Holy Spirit, and condemnation for the unbelieving." To him belongs much credit for laying the foundation of the Reformation.

In 1804 a group under the leadership of Barton W. Stone had set out on a mission similar to that which characterized the movements of the Campbells. In the publication of the "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery", they dissolved their name and

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much of their external organization, and expressed a desire "to sink into union with the body of Christ at large", using only the Bible as their rule of faith and practice. This group called themselves Christians and continued to exist under that name until 1835, when they united with the followers of the Campbells.

The Reformers had begun to use the name "Disciples of Christ" about the time of their separation from the Baptists. It was a name which they felt to be expressive of their loyalty to Christ and, above all, it was scriptural. When the "Christians" or followers of Stone, united with the "Disciples" the matter of name, whether it be "Christian" or "Disciple", was one of those minor points left to private opinion; the majority seemed to prefer "Disciples of Christ". There were a few of Stone's followers who refused to go into the union and they remain, even till today, separated from the "Disciples", known, however, as "Christians". They comprise the Christian Church which has recently united with the Congregationalists.

For thirty-five years Alexander Campbell remained the foremost figure in this united movement which was already numerically strong and growing rapidly. He gained a host of admirers and friends through his oral discourse and through his writings. It should be stated, too, in all fairness, that through these same mediums he added enemies to the list. Such is the natural result of speaking pointedly and profoundly on contro-

versial issues. In spite of his boldness and frankness, his enemies were few, outside of those which resulted from prejudice or ignorance, for his intellectual equals, though bitterly opposed to his cause, admired the man for his honesty and courage. While with the Baptists, Alexander Campbell started the "Christian Baptist", a monthly publication. In 1830 he discontinued it and started the "Millennial Harbinger", a much superior monthly religious journal, through which he gained a wide reputation. Young Campbell became particularly famous as a debater. He was well educated, knew the Bible as few men of his day did, and was not afraid to take a stand for an issue which he believed to be true. While debating, he became heated in his enthusiasm, apparently, however, with utmost control and deepest sincerity. Man to man he was always the gentleman, even with his most ardent opponent. Robert Owen said of him after a nine day debate, "That which I admire in him above all else is his downright honesty and fairness to what he believes to be the cause of truth."

In 1829, Campbell made a visit to Washington D. C. and both houses adjourned to hear him speak for two hours in the House of Representatives. President James Madison said of him, "It was my pleasure to hear him very often as a preacher of the Gospel, and I regard him as the ablest and most original expounder of the Scriptures I have ever heard."

The cause of the Disciples prospered greatly at

the hands of a leader with such prestige, ability, and influence as that of Alexander Campbell. The most active years of his life he gave to the cause which the Disciples represented without receiving any salary, his income being derived from farm property.

Thomas and Alexander Campbell were both seekers after truth with all possible devotion and energy. Would that the church which has its roots in their personalities could always be as courageous and as zealous in the quest for truth.

Chapter III.

THE EARLY DISCIPLES.

I. Original idea shaded by organization

- A. Apostolic Church
- B. Denomination

II. Need of organization

- A. Positive factors
- B. Negative factors

III. Return to apostolic Christianity

- A. Emphasis from Reformation to Restoration
- B. Roots in "Declaration and Address"

IV. Criticism

- A. Literalists
- B. Opposition versus cooperation
- C. Personal salvation first

V. Contributions

- A. Quest for freedom and liberty
- B. Values in simple scriptural interpretations
- C. Values in emphasis on Apostolic pattern
- D. Emphasis on Christian union.

THE EARLY DISCIPLES.

It was a candid European who, on a visit to America, remarked to a friend, "You Americans get an idea, then you begin to organize and by the time the organization is complete you have forgotten the original idea." The insight of such an observation contains not only a criticism of twentieth century Americans, but it well characterizes a principle which is seen throughout all of history, and particularly religious history. Man's native impulse to freedom continually drives with terrific force against the solid walls of thought barriers, whether they be in the form of law, custom, tradition, or creed. Occasionally, as one turns the pages of history, he finds where such an impulse has forced its way through every obstacle, and as a result men have stood for a moment in new glory, basking in the sunlight of newly found freedom. But in order that that which they have found may be made permanent an organization is formed to nourish, protect, and promote it. The result of this succession of movements has generally been that the newly discovered freedom is rendered obscure as it is housed behind the walls of a new organization which protects it so effectively that it vanishes completely from sight. That which was for a moment freedom becomes housed again behind the thought-barriers of a new organization and thus is no longer

freedom. By the time the organization is complete, the original idea is lost.

Is not the effect of this principle seen on the very pages of the New Testament itself? Christ found and offered to the world a new freedom--a new life--a new walk with God and man; he had captured and made real an ideal. In order that that ideal would be preserved as a living force, an organization was built around it, and the latter part of the New Testament gives us an insight into that organization, the church. True, the spirit of Christ is not lost in this early church, but it is often dimmed as the shadow of an organization falls across its path. The truest and most vitally real picture of what the message and meaning of the Christian Church should be, by virtue of its name, is to be found in the life and teachings of Jesus himself, rather than in the apostolic church.

The history of the rise of denominations and sects throughout all of protestantism gives further testimony to the fact of such a principle. Its consequences are not the fostering of freedom but rather the hindering of it. The courageous soul which first breaks through into new light does enjoy a larger freedom, but those who follow in his steps are bound by the laws which are created to protect the first man's newly discovered truth. Thus, for the second man "freedom" becomes an obligation, imposed by law. What Christ was free to think has often been incorporated into creeds and thus

offered for man's unquestioning belief if he would seek salvation. What Luther was free to think, those who followed in the Lutheran Church were obligated to think. What Calvin was free to think, those who followed as Calvinists were compelled to think. So runs a principle through history from which the Disciples of Christ have not been entirely free.

After the separation from the Baptists, Mr. Campbell found himself the leader of a group which was without any organizational form or connections, other than the holding of periodical district meetings, but was, nevertheless, bound together by common interests and was increasingly manifesting a group consciousness. The immediate task before this group which had now emerged was that of finding a means to maintain and promote a common group life and consciousness. There must of necessity be institutions, habits, mechanisms, and plans through which their common interest can be objectified in a united and effective manner. "Assuming the existence of deep identities of purpose, the two sides of the process of forming a group consciousness are: the growth of a body of practices, ideas, habits, phrases, and leaders; and the development of a keen feeling of difference from others."⁽¹⁾

The institutions which arose as positive factors in the development of a sense of solidarity were many:

(1) Garrison, REF. p. 145

evangelism, journalism, district and general meetings, educational efforts, and missionary enterprises. That which was the chief negative factor, serving to weld them together through a keener awareness of separateness from all others was the fact that they were "Christians only". This awareness was fortified by the fact that they had been expelled from the Baptist fellowships. They did not call themselves the church, but they did turn right back to the New Testament with the sole ambition of becoming pure "churches of Christ".

This group was motivated by the desire for Christian unity. The very fact that narrowness and intolerance on the part of a church had caused them to start down a separate trail made them more zealous in their efforts. They were convinced that the only justifiable basis of unity was the pattern of simple Christianity in its original and uncorrupted form. Quite naturally the method of discovering original Christianity must be to search the scriptures. Quite in keeping with this program, Alexander Campbell proposed as the aim of his new periodical, the "Millennial Harbinger",: "(1) To restore the faith, ordinances, organization, and terms of admission of the apostolic church; (2) to do this by resting absolutely upon the authority of the Bible; (3) and by these means to arrive at what Thomas Campbell had called simple evangelical Christianity and to make this the basis of union." (1)

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As they studied the pages of the New Testament, Mr. Campbell published his Harbinger "Extra" entitled, "Order". In this he elaborated his views of church government. Three distinct officers were recognized, namely, Evangelists, Elders, and Deacons. The Evangelists were the proclaimers of the Gospel, the announcers of the good news. They were to preach, baptize, set churches in order, and ordain Elders in the separate churches who were to take the oversight and care for the flock of God. The Deacons were to be men of great faith whose special duty was to look after the temporal affairs of the church.

As the Disciples of Christ passed through the creative period into this organic period something worthy of note may be seen to have happened. It is a wise adage which reads, "What gets a man's attention eventually gets the man". That is practically what happened here. When these hardy pioneers of Western America emphatically took their stand on the sole authority of the New Testament they naturally turned to the New Testament with more interest than ever before. It is to be imagined that many who were caught up in the great evangelical wave of the new movement placed their faith in this sole authority before they had turned many of its pages. Be that as it may, it is enough to suggest that the workings of the movement resulted in new interest in the Bible.

With a new interest in the New Testament as the

sole authority and a desire to follow the New Testament pattern for churchmanship, the emphasis of the Disciples was changed from Reformation to Restoration. They began to see what "the ancient order of things was" and this they wanted in its every detail. Surely, it was the only authority on which all of Christendom could someday be united. Christian union itself took a back seat while restoration of the Apostolic Church became the immediate objective and the driving force. "Thomas Campbell was Still giving his gentile life in appeals for union, but conditions were forcing Alexander for a time to give more attention to the restoration of 'the ancient order of things', as it was called, than to Christian union and, because of his great personality, the movement unconsciously began shifting from its original basis to the restoration of primitive Christianity, which continued so in the main until the opening of the twentieth century--not that the vision of a united Christendom was lost, for later, Campbell, apparently conscious of the shift of basis, said: 'The conversion of the world is planned and ordered by the will of heaven to be dependent upon the unity of the disciples as well as this unity dependent upon the apostles' testimony." Restoration, therefore, became the key-note."⁽¹⁾

The Disciples vindicated their right to separate existence on the contention that their movement was emphatically in the interests of Christian union. "But

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when they set up an organization of their own and asked all of the denominations to come to their religious position, it looked to these denominations like an invitation for all of them to join the Disciples, and this to the denominations was not a very gracious invitation." (1)

In view of this situation it was necessary for the Disciples to defend their grounds. Their claim was that they were simply asking others to occupy the primitive platform of the early church. They were not asking others to join them but only to join in the restoration of Apostolic Christianity.

The Disciples had always claimed the Bible as a seat of authority, but while they were busy with reformation the fundamental principles of their movement were not so distinctly and emphatically affirmed, particularly in much detail. Now, as they were charged with being a new denomination, they felt bound to defend themselves by taking a stand "for a complete return to the Apostolic faith and practice in everything that pertains to the Christian life".

This high claim required good reasoning to sustain it. Such was formulated around the following propositions:

"(1) The Bible and the Bible alone is all-sufficient as a rule of faith and practice.

"(2) As this Bible contains the will of God to man, it is capable of being understood, and its teaching

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applied in all matters pertaining to the Christian life.

"(3) The full recognition and acceptance of Bible teaching will heal the divisions of Christendom, and unite in one body all professed Christians who love our Lord, Jesus Christ better than those things that alienate and divide them into practically antagonistic denominations."⁽¹⁾

These principles very definitely go back to Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address". To Thomas Campbell is due the credit of their discovery. His are the words, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where they are silent we are silent." He held that nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church that was not as old as the New Testament.

The principles of the "Address" are unfolded along the lines of Meldenius' famous maxim, "Unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, charity in all things." While Thomas Campbell expressly rejects this maxim, he adopts its essential meaning under the words, "faith" and "opinion". They correspond to "essentials" and "non-essentials". He preferred the words "faith" and "opinion" as being more biblical, and all the teaching of the "Address" may be gathered around these principles.

The testimony of Alexander Campbell gives evidence to the place of this Address in the early Disciples' program. "The 'Declaration and Address' contains what may

⁽¹⁾ Moore, CHDC p. 320

be called the embryo or the rudiments of a great and rapidly increasing community. It virtually contains the elements of a great movement of vital interest to every citizen of Christ's kingdom."⁽¹⁾

Let it be said, however, that the principles of the "Declaration and Address", when carried in the heart of Thomas Campbell, who was a man of "profound spirituality, Christ-like gentleness and sweetness of spirit, and a generous, catholic and affectionate nature", have a different meaning than when in the hands of a group of practical literalists. At this point the writer feels the necessity of making three criticisms of the program of the early Disciples.

We have already said that the leadership had now passed from Thomas to Alexander Campbell. Alexander Campbell was a practical man; he could argue, he could persuade, he gained his national fame as a debater. It is necessary for a debater to know his subject, to be able to state it plainly and pointedly and then defend it. The very nature of the case leads to dogmatism. At one time Alexander Campbell defended baptism by immersion in a debate which lasted for eighteen days. Does one need to ask whether or not he was dogmatic?

By his ability as a debater young Campbell did much for the cause of truth. For himself he had accepted an historical approach to the Bible, but those who made up the rapidly growing rank and file of his followers were

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not schooled in the matter of an historical biblical approach. Those who made up the great personnel of the early Disciples were western pioneers. On the whole they had little schooling, and virtually dug their living out of the dirt. The hardy pioneer was not concerned with a chemical analysis of the soil, his soil consisted of that dirt which the plow turned over. Neither was he concerned about the date or authorship of biblical books or the synoptic problem; rather, he read his Bible and what he read was what was there. Now this principle of turning back to the Bible and the Bible only for every detail of program and worship, led by one who was essentially a practical man as contrasted with the mystic, and one who because of his method of offense, was forced to become dogmatic; taking its following from a mass of matter-of-fact pioneers who had no knowledge of an historical approach, and accepted just what they found as the real, led to a narrow, literal interpretation of the Bible.

The principle of restoration is a noble one if there can be found that which should rightly be restored. Often, however, a restoration movement cannot grasp that which it seeks to restore and ends by offering a substitute; such a process generally happens quite unconsciously. Here, for example, were a group of pioneers earnestly seeking to restore primitive Christianity. Really primitive Christianity existed in the personality of Jesus. To recapture it is to take on the spirit

of Him, which is always a spirit of good-will and love. But that spirit, that love, that devotion of the Primitive Christian, could neither be seen nor handled in a manner in which the western homesteader was accustomed to seeing and handling things. That which was real to the westerner was what he could put his hands on, and that he found, not in "the pearl of great price", but rather, in the casket in which the "pearl" had been placed by some early Christians for safe-keeping. This pioneer mind could grasp, could see, the framework into which Christianity had been cast by the Apostolic Church. Here, it could get a hold, and hang on; here were certain definite steps; here was a system that the eye could see and the mind could grasp. Lost in a system of Pauline theology many early Disciples became literalists, following a church pattern, where they could find it, rather than a Christian spirit.

This program led the Disciples of Christ into difficulties and entanglements from which they are not yet free. It has led to bitterness, strife, and finally division in the ranks of that group which justified its independence on the basis of seeking union among all Christians. There is reason for such difficulty, for "Behind the whole restoration idea, as applied to specific doctrines, ordinances, polity, and practice, lie two presuppositions which are themselves not 'primitive': first, that the church as it existed historically in the apostolic age, or at least as it existed in the minds

of the apostles, contained no admixture of human influences and was therefore a permanent pattern with respect to part or all of its practices; and second, that the New Testament presents a substantially inerrant picture of such a primitive church."⁽¹⁾ It is not necessary to linger longer here. An historical and scientific method of Bible study has made the student world well aware of the fact that the pages of the New Testament do not contain a divinely appointed blue-print, with all details, for the building and maintenance of a church throughout the ages, and hence, to seek such in every detail is only to lead to bewilderment.

It should be further stated that to this end the Disciples' program was not unique. It has been said earlier in this paper that nearly every church came into being for the purpose of "restoring primitive Christianity". Turning the pages of history reveals also that this policy was not adequate, it was not sufficient as a means of attaining the desired end.

The second criticism of the method and message of the Disciples of Christ while still in their infancy, to be offered here is an outgrowth of this policy of literal interpretation. Such an interpretation quite naturally led to specific steps which constituted a system, or "the way". Namely, these steps were, "faith, repentance, baptism". These were the 'handles' which the pioneer could grasp. The end to be reached by the

⁽¹⁾ Garrison, RFF p. 40

taking of these steps was the soul's salvation. So engrossed in the saving of souls did this group become that it often lost sight of other ends, justice, and mercy, and truth.

The way of the soul's salvation was clear to them and so they had no fear. But within the ranks of the group there developed a conscious feeling that they had the way. Since the saving of souls was the end of the religious process and since they had the way, it was for them to bring the world their way. One wonders if they did not sometimes overlook great truths abiding within the confines of other denominations as they set out to win the world.

Something of an attitude which well may have led to too limited an appreciation of other groups may be seen in a sentence of Alexander Campbell's, "Tired of new creeds and new parties in religion, and of the numerous abortive efforts to reform the reformation; convinced from the Holy Scriptures, from observation and experience, that the union of the Disciples of Christ is essential to the conversion of the world, and that the correction and improvement of no creed, or partisan establishment in Christendom could ever become the basis of such a union, communion and cooperation, as would restore peace to a church militant against itself, or triumph to the common salvation; a few individuals, about the commencement of the present century, began to reflect upon the ways and means to restore primitive Christianity."⁽¹⁾

(1) Campbell, CS p. 5

It is true that there was needed a real contribution to the protestant cause at this point and that which grew out of the "Declaration and Address" was truly a much needed asset. When a group, however, permits itself to see practically no good so far as its aim is concerned in established Christendom it is apt to ignore the good which does exist merely because it is already existing. Thus, it is being suggested here that the Disciples, while they were yet a new group, adopted an attitude which in some instances forced them to work in opposition to, when more good would have resulted if they had worked in cooperation with existing Christendom.

Thirdly, remembering that "the way of salvation" had opened before the minds of these Disciples, another negative suggestion grows out of the natural consequences of following a "soul-saving" program. The salvation of mankind is a natural outgrowth of Christianity; in fact, it is at the very root of Christendom. To become literalists, however, is sometimes to miss the richest fragrance, the greatest salvation that can be possible, that of the whole world. One cannot enthusiastically set out on a mission of saving other souls without the surety of his own soul's salvation. Quite naturally, then, because of the very nature of the case, personal salvation would receive first consideration.

Here seems to be a paradox, for such is apparently the natural conclusion; but it doesn't fit with the

proposition of One who came to lose Himself that others might be saved. Jesus bid man lose himself, rather than save himself, and to follow a formula which puts personal salvation first is to miss the highest realm of Christianity.

It is not to be said that this group of Christian enthusiasts missed the essence of vital religion, far from it. History gives testimony to the vitality of much of their religious enthusiasm. But one does feel justified in saying that to the extent in which they were literalists only, and hence found salvation through a 'formula' which put self first, rather than through consecration and devotion to a cause greater than self, they were not true to the highest in Christ.

Evidence to the fact that this is not an unjust criticism may be found in the words of Alexander Campbell, himself: "Next to our personal salvation, two objects constituted the 'summum bonum', the supreme good, worthy of the sacrifice of all temporalities. The first was the union, peace, purity, and harmonious cooperation of Christians, guided by an understanding enlightened by the Holy Scriptures; the other, the conversion of sinners to God."⁽¹⁾

By what authority does a Christian give "personal salvation" priority over the salvation of others? Jesus said, "Lose yourself". He relinquished all claim on his own life or his own salvation in the devotion to

⁽¹⁾ Campbell, CS p. 9

the cause of others. We see, too, written in the history of the middle nineteenth century, the devotion to the salvation of others on the part of these Disciples. What we criticize, then, is not a conscious program on their part, far from it, but rather the natural result of too literal an interpretation of the New Testament.

But, lest one think negative criticism only is held for the activities of this group during the middle and later nineteenth century, we hasten to suggest that there is another side. The very fact of such rapid growth as was the case here gives testimony to a vital contribution. When, in 1811, the Christian Association became a church, they could boast of but thirty members, but by 1900 the membership of the Disciples of Christ Church totaled one-million, one-hundred and twenty thousand in the United States and Canada.⁽¹⁾ Surely a real hunger was being satisfied, thirsty souls were finding that which quenched, else there never would have been such growth.

If there was a static framework being builded as a natural result of literalism, there was at the same time a germ within the framework. There was within a light seeking to shine. This body had come into existence on the quest of freedom and that desire for freedom was always to be found somewhere near the heart of the movement. True, it was sometimes lost sight of, hidden beneath an outer shell, but probe deeply, and it was there. While a great group of pioneers seemed more concerned

(1) Garrison, RFF P. 277

with the structure, Alexander Campbell and other brave leaders clung to a desire for freedom. When one sees Campbell debating for eighteen days on the subject of "Baptism by Immersion" he wonders how much toleration or individual liberty he would have granted on that point. But again, let the surgeon cut deep, and liberty is there. Campbell's toleration of individual freedom, even on this matter of immersion, which at times seemed the very "summum bonum" of Discipleship, is seen in a letter he wrote in reply to a query on whether or not there were any Christians among protestant parties:

"But who is a Christian? I answer, every one that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will.....

"Should I find a Pedit-Baptist more intelligent in the Christian scriptures, more spiritually minded, and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him who loveth most. Did I act otherwise I would be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians.....

"There is no occasion, then, for making immersion, on a profession of the faith, absolutely essential to a Christian....."(1)

Here is one evidence of the toleration and liberty which is to be found at the heart of this group.

These early Disciples made other contributions to

the religious world which need to be commended as we evaluate the positive side of a movement which was yet in its youth. Their interpretation of the Scriptures was simple and humanly rational. It has been suggested that here they finally became literalists, but be that as it may, their simple approach to the Bible brought great Christian convictions out of the realm of mystical abstractions into the realm of practical understanding. Conversion for them had a meaning. It was sometimes accompanied by physical demonstrations, but that was only further testimony to the fact that in the experience of conversion something actually happened. "Taking off the old and putting on the new" really was significant. Likewise, the Holy Spirit was a reality. Here was not just a thing to be thought about, but rather it was a Spirit as real as a person who came into ones life and literally took possession.

While thinking about the Disciples' interpretation of the Scriptures, it should be borne in mind that the afore-mentioned liberty on the part of the leaders applied here too. Alexander Campbell, a thorough student of the Bible, was constantly urging a better understanding of it. The Campbells recognized a difference between the Old and New Testaments and offered an intelligent understanding on this point. Alexander Campbell's famous "Sermon on the Law" was a contrast between the Old and New Testaments, and an argument for the Christian's freedom from the Old Testament law. To him the sole authority was Christ.

To the Campbells the Bible must be understood, for it was the forerunner of education. Moral character is an essential part of all education, and hence the Bible must have a place in the educational system. In 1841, A. Campbell founded Bethany College in Brooke County, West Virginia, and for the first time in the history of the world, made the Bible a text-book, like other books in a college curriculum. Quite naturally, there came violent protests from colleges and journals charging him with sacrilege and infidelity, but he had raised the Bible to the level of possible understanding. He had taken it from the realm of the mysterious and put it in the category of the real.

In addition to their cry for freedom and an intelligent approach to the Bible, the Disciples' return to, and emphasis on, the pattern and form of the Apostolic Church constituted a real contribution to protestantism in the nineteenth century. Though they may have gone too far in following a literal pattern, they did boldly proclaim the Gospel way as opposed to the way of man-made creeds, doctrines, and dogmas. Their Gospel simplicity as opposed to the entangled mass of man-made systems which did naught but hold the various sects of protestantism in check produced a vivid contrast before the eyes of the world. The result was that all of protestantism saw the need of a return to some far simpler way than that of bewildering creeds and negative restrictions.

The fourth positive virtue, or contribution of this group, is an outgrowth of their chief emphasis, the union of the church. They themselves, in becoming a new group, added a denomination to the already overpopulated Christendom. To that degree they certainly did not make fewer the denominations. Neither did other groups hasten to unite with them. But even though they did not immediately lessen the number of existing sects, they did do two things. Namely, they gave to protestantism a vision of the "Body of Christ". More than that, it was the vision of an unbroken body. So emphatically did they emphasize the oneness of the "Body of Christ" that the vision still remains as a goal for all of Christendom. Secondly on this point, they created a consciousness of the sin of a divided church. Since the "Body of Christ" was meant to be one, it was nothing short of sin for it to exist as a broken body. Here again their emphasis was so strong that all of protestantism was awakened and made conscious of an evil which had heretofore been merely a situation.

This, too briefly and perhaps inadequately presented, constitutes a vital part of the Disciples' past. What shall they do with it as they awake in the morning of the twentieth-century? Disciples have caught the flaming torch of a noble heritage, they cannot, they must not let it grow dim!

Chapter IV.

DISCIPLES TODAY.

I. Sources of motivation

A. Present

B. Past

II. Needed Emphasis

A. New appreciation of the Bible

B. Practical application of the ethics of
Jesus.

C. Freedom of man.

D. Mysticism

E. Christian union

F. Love.

DISCIPLES TODAY.

It is always more difficult to evaluate historical movements of the present than those of the past. When one looks back across the pages of history he sees things in a truer perspective, as he sees a landscape in a truer perspective from a distance than when standing upon that which he would see. Then, too, while one may owe a large heritage to the past he is not as definitely a part of the past as he is of the present. Therefore, he is freer in his criticism and inclined to be more honest in his judgement. It is easier to say, "My ancestors were wrong" than to say "I am wrong".

Be this as it may, the task at hand calls for honesty and fairness with respect to forefathers and to those who hold the banner of Discipleship today. In as far as one with a limited experience is capable of judging, honesty and fairness to past and present well prevail throughout the present analysis.

There are two sources from whence the task of the twentieth century Disciple must arise. First, is the very fact of existence. The fact that upwards of two-million persons are banded together in a common program, meeting in similar worship experiences, wearing the same name, being known as one body, and heralding the flag of the Christ, in a storm-tossed twentieth century world, very definitely leads to a program of hard work--work

which is not abstract, but which is at hand in a very real sense because a body of Christians is alive in an un-Christian world.

The second fountain from which the motivation and task of the present-day Disciple springs lies in the path of Disciple history. The true heritage of this group, out of which motivation rises, is found not alone in the history of the organization; true there is much of value here, but it goes beyond the time of an organization to the background which gave rise to the organization. What were the fires which burned within the souls of Thomas and Alexander Campbell before a new denomination had even been dreamed of? These have been suggested and will be reviewed again; it is enough here to say that in them lies hidden a very real part of the mission of modern Discipledom.

This, which is called "our heritage", is sometimes ignored by members of the group. It cannot be, however, if one would be true to the name which he wears. It is not good ethics, neither is it good judgement to accept the honor that goes with the name and fail to share in the vision and in the devotion that gave birth to the movement. It has often been suggested that there are many wearing the name Christian who are indifferent to the issues faced by the First Christian. Surely such is hypocrisy. But in it is seen a situation often paralleled in history. To be numbered among the Disciples of Christ and to ignore what they have stood for from

their inception is sheer mockery. On the other hand, to seek and find this heritage, and to be loyal, in so far as in doing so one is loyal to the Galilean, is to share in the vision, in the responsibilities, in the victories and defeats, and in the work of the brotherhood. This common heritage makes the Disciples brothers in a common task, even though they be separated by miles.

By looking back across his history, the Disciple also has a means of evaluating. That which is noble, that which seems touched by the hand of God, shines out above much which is undesirable. Where else can the Disciple turn for a check on his own position, save to his history? How else can the Disciple determine whether or not God has used the group of which he is a member, save in the history of that group? If you want a Disciple with real conviction, find one who is steeped in the knowledge and spirit of his heritage.

These two well-springs of motivation, the fact of existence, and heritage, are not pouring out great opposing currents of thought. In fact, the similarity of the task to which each calls the twentieth-century Disciple is notable. The task of this group today is not fundamentally different from that of their fathers. True, there are new points of emphasis needed, there are new problems to be faced, and there have been certain emphases of this group in the past which need not be particularly stressed today, but throughout its entire history there is a unity in its mission. What then

is the needed emphasis in the twentieth-century for the Disciples of Christ? What does their heritage fit them to contribute to protestantism today? And, finally, what is needed within their own ranks to make their contribution to the protestant cause more valuable and effective? Six points of needed emphases today, warranted by Disciples' heritage, and points by which Disciples may strengthen the cause of protestantism and hence themselves, are being suggested.

I. First, beginning at a point where the emphasis of today seems almost perfectly to coincide with that essential to Disciple heritage, is the need of a new appreciation of the Bible. Such must not only include the fact of the Bible but also an understanding of it. The Bible must be an open book; not one to go to, but one to go through. The Bible is like a telescope in that we look not at it to find the object of our quest, but through it to the Star on which it is focused. Too often religionists have looked at it, piece by piece, and thus have missed the beauty of its focus.

Such an attitude is not consistent with twentieth-century scholarship. The critical scholar of the modern age does not permit that which is not to stand; hence, false views of the Bible have had to retreat. An historical, scientific approach to this great composite of sacred truth has not lessened its value but rather increased it. That which was untouchable because clothed in magic and mystery has become usable. That which

has been beyond the realm of human understanding now stands as vitally real and significant because viewed in a light that makes it understandable. And, finally, man stands nearer to the God of the Scripture than ever before. Stripped of magic, God stands to clasp the hand of man, in an experience more vitally real than ever before.

All this is the result of an historical method of Bible study and should be sufficient evidence to make a case for its furtherence. If an historical attitude toward the Bible has brought man closer to God, and the thoughtful person will not deny it, then certainly all of protestantism is called to move in this direction. But protestantism will not lead the world in any direction unless those denominational groups of which it is composed dare to step out and lead the way. Here, then, is a needed emphasis for the Disciples of Christ today.

But the situation of the twentieth century does not stand alone in calling the Disciples to a position of leadership in the direction of scientific Bible study. Such is a very real part of their heritage; it constitutes one of the seeds from which they sprang. The Disciples of Christ have themselves made a real contribution to protestantism at this point; now they are called to rise up to the level of their heritage.

It has already been suggested that both Thomas and Alexander Campbell followed the thinking of Johannes Coccejus who introduced a scientific approach to the Bible. Attention has been called to the Campbells'

insistence on the difference between the Old and New Testaments. It has likewise been stated that Alexander Campbell put the Bible in a college curriculum for the first time in the history of the world. Alexander Campbell, himself always seeking the truest historical meaning in the pages of the Bible, offered his followers seven rules for interpreting the Scriptures. That their nature may be suggested two of them are here quoted:

"Rule I. On opening any book in the sacred Scriptures, consider first the historical circumstances of the book. These are the order, the title, the author, the date, the place, and the occasion of it...

"Rule VI. In the interpretation of symbols, types, allegories, and parables this rule is supreme. Ascertain the point to be illustrated; for comparison is never to be extended beyond that point--to all the attributes, qualities, or circumstances of the symbol, type, allegory, or parable."(1)

These are only two of the rules. They are all of like character, and give evidence beyond the shadow of a doubt to Campbell's insistence on an historical approach to the Bible. Intelligence, and above all, intellectual honesty, were essential to an understanding of the Scriptures in the opinion of both of the Campbells. Of course, there have been many conservative and reactionary Disciples in their attitude toward Biblical criticism, but "those who have been true to the spirit of the fathers have never been of this mind".

(1) Campbell, CS p. 16-17.

Such a study of the Bible does not for an instant make it less real. On the other hand, it makes it a vital instrument in the hand of one who would propagate the religion of Jesus. Before the march of the sympathetic student, the Bible opens to new areas of life, to new realms of experience, out to a broader horizon where life is rich, and where the adventure of religion is always gloriously thrilling.

Silhouetted against the background of his rightful heritage the twentieth-century Disciple stands in a unique position from which to make all of protestantism richer with this new appreciation of the Bible. The critical eye of modern scholarship calls for it, Disciple heritage demands it, the rank and file of protestantism are hungry for it; and so one could go on, but it is enough. Disciples, to the task!

II. A scientific approach to the Bible brings one nearer to the living Christ than he can possibly arrive through the traditional attitude. But when one stands in a storm-tossed world at the feet of a living Christ, if he has a heart yet unhardened, it is torn to bleeding. It is crushed by the sight of a world which has outgrown its framework, which has apparently outlived the need of ten-million of its inhabitants, and is attempting to make adjustments without a profound ethic. This situation introduces the second point of needed emphasis, namely, a practical application of the

ethics of Jesus.

Here again, the first demand grows out of present-day needs. The very fact of ones being a Christian, if he be true to its implications, calls him to bring into being in his every situation the ethics of Jesus. Where great bodies of Christians are banded together simple loyalty bids them seek the ethical standards of their Master for the whole world. Today, all of Christendom needs to be re-awakened at this point. Would any say today that the church is not alive? Far from it; but on this matter of the ethics of Jesus it needs to be more alive and more active than it has yet been.

But once more it is suggested that the Disciples are in a position to make a vital contribution if they will. The early demand by the first Disciples to return to primitive Christianity did not exclude the ethics of those early Christians. The plea of the Campbells was always that Christ was the final authority; His was the pattern to be followed; such cannot be separated from its ethical implications.

In the year that Alexander Campbell spent at Glasgow and became so enthralled with the thing the Haldanes were doing, he definitely incorporated the ethical implications of the Christian Gospel into his own thinking. It has been suggested how that prior to this experience he had found the church cold and "respectable" and failing to be concerned with the real situations of life. Young Campbell's walking out of his native church was

an expression of the fact that he wanted a religion more nearly like that of these brothers who "undertook by every means which they could devise to rescue religion from the hands of those who seemed to regard it as merely a dignified profession and set it free to do its proper work." (1) Here are the practical implications of the ethics of Jesus being accepted at the cost of one's church.

Very definitely the concern for an application of the ethics of Jesus today leads one into the realm of what is called the Social Gospel. What is needed is not a Social Gospel which stands in opposition to a Personal Gospel, but rather one which is the natural fulfillment of the latter. As the Christian religion offers one a personal relationship with God it just as definitely binds him to the task of securing that relationship for all, which, in its very nature, demands a Christian ethic.

A modern Disciple who has a vision of the task at hand, in a recently published article reviews the Disciples' heritage, and in its light faces the world today. Then, with other things, he suggests: "If the Disciples want to be a great people, let them become known as the leaders in a fearless and sincere struggle for a Christian social order." (2) Here is a task to which Disciples are bound both by the fact of their heritage and also by the fact of their existence in the

(1) Garrison, RFF p. 81

(2) O'Neal, "Disciples Recovering Their Dynamic"
CE, Nov. 29, '34.

twentieth-century in the name of Christ. Let them be loyal to their fathers and to those whom they serve today; but above all, let them be loyal to the cause of Him whose name they wear, and honestly handle His message and His principles.

III. Another awakening which the world has experienced is that of the freedom of man. Society looks upon man today as a being created to be free, and man, too, has gained a new sense of his own freedom. But has not man's freedom been continually sought by Christianity? No, be it said to the discredit of organized religion, "Christianity" has sometimes stood directly across the path of man's freedom. While "Christianity", however, has sometimes opposed freedom, the true spirit of Christ has always demanded it.

Now there appears another crux, another of those points where the spirit of Jesus does not harmonize with a phase of modern organized society. What is to be done then? Shall one say "Turn away, Jesus, you do not fit here."? Or is there not a better alternative, that of mustering all available forces and uniting them in an effort to adjust modern society until it shall conform to the spirit of the Galilean? Surely, the latter is supreme and the term "adjust" may have to be replaced with that of "revolutionize", nevertheless, such is the task at hand.

But, speaking of the freedom of man, it has been stated that there has already been an awakening at

this point. The fact is that history reveals several such awakenings, and each has left society further on its way; but the goal is not yet reached. In this direction new heights have been gained, but great peaks lie yet unscaled. To this end all of protestantism, which owes its own existence to the desire for freedom, must unite.

What of the Disciples of Christ and their place in this protestant quest of freedom? Here, again, the jury must return a verdict of guilty in behalf of Disciples whenever and wherever they have failed to exhort the cause of, and particularly to practice, the freedom of man. For the cause of man's freedom is another of those which lies at the very root of their beginning, and all through Disciple history there has been a fire kindled here which has added to the glow of protestantism. Thomas Campbell asked for religious toleration--it was not granted--hence, a new religious body. Alexander Campbell accepted and made his own the philosophy of John Locke which had at its very core a determined emphasis on the freedom of man. The thesis of John Locke's writings was intellectual, political, and religious liberty. He "emphasized and even exaggerated the claims of the individual". It was Locke's theory that men should hold their theological opinions subject to the consideration that they may be wrong and put the emphasis on the practical virtues. This aspect of Locke's philosophy has been stated in a previous chap-

ter; it is repeated here to remind all of the Disciples' unique heritage at this point. Remember, "Alexander Campbell was as good a Lockian as Locke himself". Here is the flower of freedom blooming in the soul of Alexander Campbell. As such, it became a great motivating factor back of this movement which became a new denomination.

Though sometimes Disciples have forgotten its significance, to wear the name Disciple is to be a sharer in this great heritage, freedom. At times the stream has been muddy and all that was within could not be seen. To go back to the mouth, however, is to see what pours into the stream, and here one finds a clear ringing call to the recognition of man's freedom.

Such freedom must be political, social, intellectual, and religious. True, society has not arrived at these ends, but there is evidence to the fact that mankind is on its way. One could dwell at length on each of these themes, showing how each is needed today, showing the injustices of using the term "freedom" and then denying it by the very situation which is created, showing, in fact, both uses and abuses at length of this great principle, the freedom of man; but need of its emphasis surely will be granted by every reader.

If Disciplism, then, remains true to its heritage, it must continue to work for social, political, and intellectual freedom. But Disciples must go a second step and include that which should precede the others,

religious freedom. Here we are glad to say that they are rapidly coming to a recognition of man's freedom even on the right to differ in the form of baptism. The writer sees much that is symbolical, much that is beautiful, much that is significant in baptism by immersion. But Disciples cannot make even the form of baptism a thing which shuts some in, and others forever out of Christian fellowship. Such is a denial of the principle of freedom, and a rejection of their heritage.

Alexander Campbell has previously been quoted on this point. The end is not the building of a "correct but exclusive fellowship", rather it is the making real of the two greatest commandments in the mind of Christ; it is the building of a brotherhood of man. Such a brotherhood will not be builded as emphasis is laid on walls of separation, but rather as the principles of Christ are stressed: those principles of love which penetrate all barriers and impell a oneness of man. Such carries with it an impetus which compels a man to leave the ninety and nine and go in search of the one who is lost. In the spirit of Christ, the one, having been found, will not be examined as to race, color, creed, or even form of baptism; rather he will be brought into the shelter of the fold. The very fact that he is a man demands it.

Society today bleeds at its heart because the principle of the freedom of man is being denied. The heritage of the Disciples of Christ demands that such free-

dom shall be granted. Only the pages of tomorrow's religious history can reveal the results. One believes, however, that the very nobility of the Disciples' heritage will be so compelling that this original cause will never be abandoned.

IV. The three points just mentioned at which a major emphasis is required on the part of the Disciples of Christ have been justified both by their need today and on the basis of their having been in the most original Disciples' minds. As the fourth point of such emphasis is mentioned, let it be stated in fairness that it grows out of today's need, and in addition, not so much the fact of its presence in the platform of early Disciples as its absence. One feels justified in saying that the very fact of its absence has led to a greater demand and greater need for it. That which is so justified is mysticism.

It would be wrong to say that Thomas Campbell, gentle, devoted spirit that he was, did not have the awareness of God that comes to the mystic; surely he did. Alexander Campbell, however, was almost entirely a practical man. He was a man who put his shoulder to the wheel when it was needed. He was a thorough student and a hard worker. A man who deals entirely with intellectual propositions and practical problems sometimes misses the God-consciousness which comes to the mystic. It is not to be supposed that Alexander did

not know God, that he did not spend much time in prayer; but his great power seems to have been in his intellect and in his ability to meet practical situations. This is not a criticism, it is only a statement of fact, for surely God used him in a very real sense. Too, it is not meant for everyone to have his name on the list of great mystics; men are ordained to be different in this respect.

It must be remembered here that the personnel of the early Disciples' churches was made up of western pioneers, practical men in every respect. This fact has been previously established. It is enough to say now that a profound mysticism was lacking among the hardy homesteaders who made up the early Disciples. Their leader was an intellectual giant, he could debate for days at a time, and furthermore, he could win his arguments. But to win an argument is not always to get close to God. This heritage, which is called the lack of the mystical, seems to run throughout the history of Disciplesism.

Mysticism, which is being suggested here as a point of needed emphasis of modern Disciples, should be properly understood. In no sense is it interpreted as a sheer emotionalism. Rather it is God-consciousness. It is the awareness of a very real and definite relationship between man and God. It means "spiritual enlightenment"; an awakening to the fact of God's presence right here and now. The mystic sees God in His

world and in human lives. "Mysticism presents to the man and woman in the field, the shop, the factory, the home, a deeper insight into the sacredness of life."⁽¹⁾

In a war-crazed machine-age which makes of human lives so many tools, or even cannon fodder, one needs the enlightenment of mysticism. Put a great mystic in the trenches opposite another man and see how long the battle goes. His finger would be numb on the trigger, for as he leveled a steel rifle and peered through its fine sights he would see not a man only, for God would be there. Men will think twice before they deal cheaply with God; they need to be made aware of His presence. In the words of Dr. Buckham, "Our age is weary of a science that resolves the universe into the mere play and product of unintelligent forces, of a materialism that seeks only utilitarian or hedonistic ends, of a philosophy that sinks spiritual values in intellectual formulas, and of a theology that goes on asserting ancient dogmas without revitalizing them or relating them to new truth. Mind and heart are calling for something deeper."⁽²⁾ It is to this hunger that comes from the depth of a man's soul that religion must respond; an adequate response will be found only in the fact of, and availability of God here and now. Too long God has been the great unknown, the "X" in our equation. Rather God is the One Great Known. It is from Him that

(1) Buckham, MML p. 24
(2) " " p. 22.

we find the unknowns. God is the most vitally real Thing in the world today.

Previously, it has been stated that the ethics of Jesus need application. If they are to be applied in the spirit of true religion, the task must be in the hands of those who are God-conscious. A cold, rigid ethical standard will not meet the world's greatest hunger. Such an ethical standard must be accompanied by the fact of God. Men who build a new social order must be conscious of the fact that they are on a mission of God and that God is in His world. They must see the sacredness of human personality. Is it not significant that God-consciousness is generally followed by an effort toward a higher ethic? The leaders in the struggle for a Christian ethic in the world are the great mystics. "If you want a man to get out and fight for a better world today, get a man who has had an hour with God."⁽¹⁾ Here is a profound religion.

If the world is ever to look toward the horizon of the Disciples' Brotherhood and behold a completed masterpiece, the vitality of mysticism must be added. In addition to the Disciples' own need, society is literally crying for that God-consciousness of the mystics. A brotherhood cannot long be Christian and fail to heed the cry.

(1) Ice, "Revival of Mysticism" CE Mar. 21, 1935

V. The fifth point to be mentioned is always one of needed emphasis, but for the Disciples it stands out as their great contribution to protestantism. That is their continual emphasis on Christian union. In a letter to the writer, Herbert L. Willett says of the Disciples: "From the first they have held to the conviction that the greatest need of the church is the unity of the people of God, and at their best they have always been whole-hearted participants in efforts to realize this unity."

It seems that it hardly need be re-stated that here is the very tap-root of Disciple origin. This was the immediate objective of the "Christian Association"; it was the inspiration and the plea of the "Declaration and Address". Other contributions which have been suggested as lying in the background of Disciplism were means to the one end, the union of God's people. Here, too, the heritage of the Disciples strikes a note of perfect harmony when it meets the call of the twentieth century.

Christendom faces a world today which is torn asunder at its very heart. A new and nobler social structure is demanded. As the Christian forces rise to meet the challenge of fascism, communism and all of the other "isms" they must rise to a common task and with a common voice. As communism bids for the leadership of humanity and places its hope in a "united front", so must Christendom bid high for that leadership, and

so must it present a united front. The very fact that this larger task has beckoned to all of protestantism has caused denominational groups to forget their own walls and meet as sons of a common cause. That which is lesser is rapidly giving way to the higher call. In addition to the experience resulting from this higher realm of action, twentieth-century scholarship has destroyed many "proof texts" which have served only to keep sects divided.

This modern demand for a oneness of Christians has an entirely different appeal than that which says we must meet under one roof. The basis here-to-fore has been that of turning back to find a pattern by which all could be governed and by which all could meet in a similar type of worship service. Such an appeal has fallen before the progress of the new which calls for "union without uniformity". Different types of worship services appeal to different persons and hence, for the best interests of Christianity, must always be. The richness of fellowship in a worship group that is not too large is often lacking in "mass" worship. As the community needs its schools, so it needs its churches. But as mankind meets in its several church buildings, worshipping through ceremony, song, or symbol, it must be conscious of a common Lord. And does not a man worship in sin if he fails to respond to the call which comes through worship? Truly, to worship Christ, no matter what the form be, is to hear the "still, small

voice". To follow that voice in whole-hearted allegiance is to take a stand yonder on the battle-front where Christ meets the forces of the world. Here, our heritage at the feet of Christ demands a united front; and, given free play, the natural result of such worship is unity.

To perfect such united action there must be a vision of the goal. In vain the builder builds if he sees not that which he would build. So all of Christendom must have before it the vision of a Christ-like world. That world must be a united one. Not only must the realm of the sacred be one with itself, but it must also be one with the secular. Here is Christian union, here is the unbroken Body of Christ, here is the brotherhood of man met before a God and Father, here is the New Jerusalem, here is the Kingdom of God.

The need of the day and their heritage unite in calling Disciples to this high end of Christian union. Do they have the vision? Do they have the willingness to cooperate with all, giving when it is needed, relinquishing all that is their own, even their name, when it will aid the cause? Do they have the courage? And, finally, do they have the spirit of Christ?

VI. The final suggestion as to the Disciples in protestantism today concerns not so much an end toward which to work as it does a means to that end; a technique by which these suggested emphases must be put forward. That technique is the "first and greatest command-

ment", love. It is talked about so much that it seems almost trite, but surely that is not the case. It remains in the same relationship to other virtues today that it had in the days of the Master. First, how can we unite Christendom; how can we make God real; how can we effectively apply the ethics of Jesus; how can we grant man his freedom; how can we understand the Bible; how can we practice simple Christianity save through love?

Love is not to be considered in exactly the same manner in which we have considered the heritage of these other points, for it is an expression of individual lives rather than of movements. Certainly, however, it is not foreign to Disciples, for all through the history of that Brotherhood have been found great souls pouring themselves out in the grasp of this mighty affection. Too, may it not be granted without question that love is needed today?

For a Christian Brotherhood, among the first places where evidence of love is to be found is in cooperation. If Disciples even use the word love, they must surrender all selfishness, and stand willing to cooperate with the Christian forces around the world. Often they become so busy in the problems and program of the local church that they forget even the simplest opportunities of cooperation. To this degree they are not loving.

Is not the measure of love to be found in what one gives of time, talent, energy, money, etc.? Is it not

true that He loved most who gave His all? The Disciples have made rapid progress; they have in little more than a hundred years increased in numerical strength from a congregation of thirty members to assume fifth place in the rank of all protestant bodies. But even though they hold fifth place in numerical strength, the amount of their missionary giving rises only to twentieth place among the protestant groups.

"Measure thy life by loss and not by gain,
Not by the wine drunk but by the wine poured
forth;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacra-
fice,
And he who suffers most has most to give."

Disciples have not learned the message of love in proportion to their growth. The immediate task is to re-capture the "first and greatest commandment". But there is hope in the fact that the lesson is not beyond the grasp of their learning capacity. They have grown in numbers more rapidly than in Godliness. Now they must of necessity turn to the Spirit of Christ with enthusiasm and determination until all who have joined their ranks shall know the meaning of love. They must grow in grace and Godliness until it can be said of them: "I was hungry and Ye gave me to eat....I was a stranger and Ye took me in." Here is love passing from the bud of idealism into the flower of reality.

When Disciples have learned the lesson of love they can again boast of their position of leadership in the field of Christian union. Then they can pour

back into all of protestantism the noble heritage that is theirs. And then they can stand hand in hand with their fellows regardless of race, color, or creed, demanding that Christ shall live in this, the twentieth century.

POSTSCRIPT.

The introduction to the foregoing discussion raised and left unanswered a question, namely: Is the task of the Disciples of Christ today worthy of the investment of one's life in its ministry? The examination of the evidence may have seemed severe; it may have seemed harsh, but if that be the case it is only because the Disciples have not reached their goals. But who would grow, and who would move the world if striving toward a goal easily obtainable? True, this Brotherhood has not arrived, but it is on its way. The end toward which it strives is a high one.

The heritage of the Disciples is, when properly understood, a noble one. It stands not only in the Disciples' past, but, because of its loftiness, because of its vision, takes its place in their tomorrow as an ideal calling them on. The Christ still leads. The world still needs. Out across the world are a great group of progressive, open-minded, courageous Disciples of Christ rapidly taking the leadership of the Brotherhood. They recognize that the job is not yet done, but how much does the worker grow after the work is done? The group is growing in numbers and in spirit. God is using them.

May the writer speak now in the first person singular to say that, aided by the points of emphases found vital to the cause of Christ in the foregoing discussion, inspired by a noble heritage, led by the Primitive Christian, I too will give my life to the cause here presented and the task here represented.

"I trace the rainbow through the rain."

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